

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-12

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY

UNCLAS STATE 190376

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, MARR, KS, US

SUBJECT: DEPT SPOKESMAN ON SENATE VOTE FOR ARMS TRANSFER
TO KOREA

REF: STATE 189479

1. FOLLOWING PRESS GUIDANCE WAS PREPARED FOR NOON BRIEFING
OF JULY 27:

QUESTION: WHAT IS THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE
STRONG WARNING THE SENATE GAVE YESTERDAY REGARDING THE
DANGER OF FURTHER TROOP WITHDRAWALS FROM KOREA?

ANSWER: WE ARE VERY GRATIFIED AT THE ACTION TAKEN BY THE
SENATE YESTERDAY REGARDING THE IMPORTANT U.S.-ROK SECURITY
RELATIONSHIP. THE SENATE FULLY GRANTED THE AUTHORITY
REQUESTED BY THE PRESIDENT TO TRANSFER SELECTED GROUND
FORCE EQUIPMENT TO KOREAN ARMED FORCES IN CONJUNCTION
WITH THE CAREFULLY PHASED WITHDRAWAL OF SOME OF THE U.S.
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FORCES IN KOREA. THE SENATE ALSO AUTHORIZED FMS CREDITS
REQUESTED TO SUPPORT THE FORCE MODERNIZATION PROGRAM OF
THE KOREAN ARMED FORCES. AS THE DEBATE FULLY DEMONSTRATED,
ANY POTENTIAL AGGRESSOR SHOULD NOT BE SO MISGUIDED AS TO
ASSUME THAT RECENT POLITICAL ISSUES BETWEEN THE UNITED
STATES AND SOUTH KOREA HAVE IN ANY MANNER WEAKENED

CONGRESSIONAL BACKING FOR THE STRONG COMMITMENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO THE DETERRENCE OF AGGRESSION AGAINST SOUTH KOREA.

AS THE PRESIDENT STATED IN HIS JULY 20 LETTER TO THE MAJORITY LEADER, THE GROUND FORCE WITHDRAWAL POLICY WILL BE "CARRIED OUT IN A MANNER WHICH PRESERVES A MILITARY BALANCE AND THUS PROTECTS THE SECURITY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA." THE PRESIDENT ALSO INFORMED SENATOR BYRD THAT HE ENDORSED THE CONGRESSIONAL WISH TO ENSURE CAREFUL REASSESSMENTS AND CONSULTATION WITH THE CONGRESS AT EACH STAGE OF WITHDRAWAL. WE LOOK FORWARD TO COOPERATING FULLY WITH CONGRESS IN THIS PRUDENT PROGRAM, AS EMPHASIZED BY THE WIDELY ENDORSED AMENDMENT ADDED TO THE BILL DURING THE DEBATE YESTERDAY.

2. ASKED ABOUT THE SENATE'S ACTIONS ON KOREA JULY 26, DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN RESPONDED BY READING THE ABOVE GUIDANCE.

3. ASKED IF THE ADMINISTRATION SHARES THE SENATE VIEW THAT U.S. TROOP WITHDRAWALS MAY SERIOUSLY RISK UPSETTING THE MILITARY BALANCE IN THAT REGION, SPOKESMAN DREW FROM SENTENCES IN THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER TO SENATOR BYRD, TO THE EFFECT THAT, IF CHANGES IN BALANCE OCCUR, "WE SHALL ASSESS THESE CHANGES IN CLOSE CONSULTATION WITH THE ROK
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AND OUR OTHER ASIAN ALLIES..."

CHRISTOPHER

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NNN

Message Attributes

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